

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 /069 W

----- 017646

O 161500Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2903

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0159

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT CY

SUBJECT: MORE ON CLERIDES' RESIGNATION

REF: (A) NICOSIA 0128 (DTG 141129Z JAN 76), (B) NICOSIA 0133
(DTG 150440Z JAN 76), (C) ATHENS 0413 (DTG 151535Z JAN 76)

1. CLERIDES' RESIGNATION STILL STANDS AS OF AFTERNOON JANUARY
16. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JANUARY 15 PASSED RESOLUTION
APPEALING TO CLERIDES TO CONTINUE AS NEGOTIATOR "FOR SAKE
OF NATIONAL INTEREST". RESOLUTION WAS ENDORSED BY ALL HOUSE
MEMBERS EXCEPT LYSSARIDES AND INDEPENDENCE PARTY LEADER
CHRISTOPHOROS CHRISTOPHIDES (WHO SUPPORTS LYSSARIDES). OF
INTEREST, COMMUNIST PARTY (AKEL) LEADER PAPAIOANNOU SUPPORTED
RESOLUTION.

2. IN RECEIVING HOUSE RESOLUTION, CLERIDES ANNOUNCED THAT HE
WOULD "TAKE INTO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION" HOUSE APPEAL AND MAKE
STATEMENT ON FINAL DECISION SATURDAY, JANUARY 17. EMBASSY
UNDERSTANDS ANNOUNCEMENT COULD ACTUALLY COME LATE TODAY.

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3. GREEK AMBASSADOR DOUNTAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR LAST NIGHT THAT GOC EVENING JANUARY 15 CONVEYED ORAL MESSAGE FROM KARAMANLIS TO CLERIDES ASKING HIM TO RECONSIDER RESIGNATION. DOUNTAS DIFFERENTIATED THIS MESSAGE FROM EARLIER "UNOFFICIAL" MESSAGE (PARA 4, ATHENS 413). DOUNTAS CONTINUES TO BE "CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL".

4. AT PRIVATE DINNER LAST NIGHT, FONMIN CHRISTOPHIDES TOLD AMBASSADOR AND EUR/SE DIRECTOR EAGLETON THAT HE WAS "QUITE DISCOURAGED", THAT CHANCES OF CLERIDES WITHDRAWING RESIGNATION WERE NO LONGER 50-50 BUT, RATHER, CLOSER TO 30-70. CHRISTOPHIDES CONFIRMED SENSE OF TZOUNIS' REMARKS TO EAGLETON (PARA 3, ATHENS 413) THAT PROBLEM IS PROFOUNDER THAN FORMATION OF NEGOTIATING SUB-COMMITTEES. ACCORDING CHRISTOPHIDES, IT REALLY INVOLVES CLERIDES' FRUSTRATION WITH CONTINUED LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIM BY MAKARIOS AND PERSISTENT UNDERCUTTING OF HIS EFFORTS TO PURSUE MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING VICIOUS SNIPING BY LYSSARIDES AND MAKARIOS' MAN IN PAPHOS, BISHOP CHRYSOSTOMOS.

5. CLERIDES' RESIGNATION WAS PROMINENTLY REPORTED JANUARY 14 IN ALL GREEK NEWSPAPERS WITH EXCEPTION OF ANTI-CLERIDES ANAGENISIS (BACKED BY CHRYSOSTOMOS), WHICH TO DATE HAS NOT MENTIONED STORY. PAPER MOST CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH MAKARIOS, PHILELEFTHEROS, HAS TREATED CLERIDES STORY GINGERLY AND THUS FAR REFRAINED FROM EDITORIALIZING. PRO-MAKARIOS ELEFTHEROS LAOS CRITICIZED CLERIDES' DECISION AND LINKED IT WITH DISCUSSION ON BROADENING GREEK CYPRIOT REPRESENTATION AT INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS. BOTH AFTERNOON DAILES HAVE CALLED ON CLERIDES TO WITHDRAW RESIGNATION. ANTI-MAKARIOS MACHI NOTED CLERIDES' FREQUENT HABIT OF RESIGNING, DEMANDED TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON BEHIND SCENES AND INSISTED CLERIDES EXPLAIN HIS DECISION. LYSSARIDES' TA NEA HAS REFRAINED FROM EDITORIALIZING ON RESIGNATION. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED CBC (RADIO AND TV) ONLY STARTED REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS JANUARY 15 WITH EMPHASIS ON EFFORTS TO CONVINCE CLERIDES TO WITHDRAW RESIGNATION. PREDICTABLY, TURK CYPRIOT NEWSPAPERS SUSPECT GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL TRAP, CLAIM RESIGNATION FUROR IS NON-ISSUE CLEVERLY DESIGNED TO OUT-MANEUVER TURKS PRIOR TO RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS.

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DENKTASH TOLD AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE JANUARY 15 THAT, MAG NANIMOUSLY, HE WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE MAKARIOS REPRESENT GREEK CYPRIOTS AT TALKS. COMMENT: GENERAL FEELING OF MEDIA HERE IS THAT CURRENT IMPASSE ANOTHER IN SERIES OF CLERIDES' RESIGNATIONS AND MOVE BY CLERIDES TO GAIN PUBLIC VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM OFFICIAL CIRCLES. CLERIDES' GENUINE FRUSTRATION AND MORE SERIOUS DIMENSION TO THIS EPISODE, HOWEVER, ARE EVIDENT IN MEDIA TREATMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NICOSI00159
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760018-0334
From: NICOSIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760150/aaaabryu.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NICOSIA 128, 76 NICOSIA 133
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JAN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JAN 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORE ON CLERIDES' RESIGNATION
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, CY, (CLERIDES, GLAFCOS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006